



# Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman  
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<http://edworkforce.house.gov/edwatch>

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## Reading is the Cornerstone of Learning

This week, President George Bush will highlight the importance of reading — the cornerstone of an effective education — and call on Congress to put the finishing touches on his *No Child Left Behind* education reform plan, which includes a vital Reading First initiative to ensure that every child can read by the fourth grade.

The President's goal is to focus the nation's attention on the reading crisis among our students. Forty percent of fourth graders cannot read at a basic level, as measured by the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP); that figure rises to 68 percent in the most impoverished schools. The 2000 NAEP showed that reading scores remained stagnant for the last 10 years. Moreover, research has consistently shown that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) program often wrongly labels minority children as needing special education simply because of reading deficiencies.

Research on reading instruction has clearly demonstrated the most effective methods of improving reading schools. Recent studies conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development concluded that a balanced approach to teaching reading must include explicit instruction in phonics — particularly importantly for disadvantaged students and others at risk of reading failure.

The research community and our nation's education leaders realize it's time to enact the kind of full-scale, systemic reform in reading embodied by the President's Reading First initiative.

### Message of the Day

**Reading is the cornerstone of a good education.**

- ❑ *The President's Reading First initiative will enable parents and teachers to diagnose children at risk of falling behind in reading.*
- ❑ *Reading First will ensure that children get help early, when it's most effective.*
- ❑ *Congress must wrap up the education bill to ensure that these vital reforms make it to the classroom as soon as possible.*

### DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- The President's *Reading First* initiative would provide \$900 million a year to help states and local districts implement comprehensive, scientifically-based reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade.
- *Early Reading First* would provide \$75 million to enhance pre-reading skills for children in model Head Start and other preschool programs.
- Because reading is a critical skill, the President has also proposed that states administer reading assessments to all students in grades 3-8.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

*"The ability to read is what turns a child into a student. When this skill is not taught, a child has not failed the system; the system has failed the child. And that child is often put on a path to frustration and broken confidence."* President George W. Bush, September 8, 2001